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ARMY	CIA	NAVY
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OSD	USIA	NSA
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	NSC	ACDA
	6	17

CA-1873

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS AND HONG KONG, MUNICH,
USUN, USNATO

FROM : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DATE: APR 3 5 39 PM '70

SUBJECT : Soviet and US Activity in Strategic Arms Field
and SALT

REF :

Over the past month or so the Department has noticed that Soviet spokesmen and Soviet news commentators have been pushing the line that recent US decisions regarding ABM and MIRV cast doubt on US seriousness with respect to the strategic arms talks which will resume in Vienna in April. These commentators either ignore or are apparently unaware of activity by their own government in the strategic weapons field over the past year.

The purpose of this message is to convey information about both Soviet and US activities over the past months in the strategic field and put them into perspective with regard to the continuation of strategic arms talks.

As can be seen from the evidence cited in part I of the enclosure, the Soviet Union has continued its testing and deployment of strategic weapons during the period that strategic arms negotiations have been underway between us. Clearly, then the Soviets do not subscribe to the argument that testing and deployment in this field negatively affect

Enclosure:

Statements about Soviet and U.S.
Strategic Arms Field

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY: [Signature] DATE 7/15/80

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2

the forthcoming talks on strategic arms, though their world wide propaganda about U.S. activities along this line has pursued such a logic in what seems to be an attempt to influence decisions within the United States Government about weapons development and deployment.

For our part, we have consistently stated that we are serious about trying to reach an agreement with the Soviets in the strategic arms field. Any actions that we have taken respecting future deployment of such weapons on our side are considered necessary because of the long lead times required for deployment, which could in any event be affected by whatever agreements we might arrive at with the Soviets. Our thinking about these problems was made clear by the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense Laird and other high officials of the United States Government in recent testimony before congressional committees and in public statements, as the excerpts in part II of the enclosure will indicate.

In connection with the relation of the Safeguard system to strategic arms negotiations, it is well to recall that in announcing this system on March 14, 1969, the President emphasized that plans for its deployment would be reviewed periodically against the changing nature of the threat to U.S. national security. In the President's own words: "Each phase of the deployment will be reviewed to insure that we are doing as much as necessary but not more than required by the threat existing at that time... Since our deployment is to be closely related to the threat, it is subject to modification as the threat changes, either through negotiations or through unilateral actions by the Soviet Union or Communist China." It is also worth noting that according to the schedule the very first operational deployments of ABM's under the Safeguard program will not take place until early 1975 (in North Dakota and Montana) and that a third site will only be operational in late 1975. Furthermore, at presently anticipated tempos, the modified Safeguard system would not become fully operative until the late 1970's.

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3

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REF ID: A66000 CA-1873

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Page 1 of 3
Encl. No. 1
A _____ to All
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STATEMENTS ABOUT SOVIET AND U.S. ACTIVITY IN THE
STRATEGIC ARMS FIELD

I. Soviet Claims and Activities

Recent statements by high level Soviet figures indicate that the USSR continues to develop a broad spectrum of strategic arms. On February 23, Soviet Army Day, the head of the Soviet rocket force, Marshal Krylov, claimed that Soviet ICBM's were the best in the world with "unlimited range", "colossal" warheads, great accuracy and instant readiness. General Shtemenko, First Deputy Chief of Staff, maintained that these rockets were able to deliver "unavertable strikes" anywhere on the globe. General Maryakhin, Deputy Defense Minister, asserted that the warheads for Soviet ICBM's were becoming more powerful and that the rockets themselves were becoming more accurate and more reliable.

With respect to ABM's, Defense Minister Grechko on this same occasion claimed that these missiles could "reliably destroy enemy rockets regardless of their altitude and speed and at great distances from the point they are defending." Deputy Defense Minister Maryakhin boasted of "new successes" in combating piloted as well as unpiloted weapons delivery systems. With respect to submarine launched missiles, Soviet Chief of Staff Zakarov claimed that such missiles could be launched from Soviet submarines under water and had a range of several thousand kilometers.

These Soviet claims are not without foundation, as is indicated by the following observations made by high officials of the U.S. Department of Defense in recent testimony before congressional committees:

-- The Soviets have gone forward at a very increased rate of testing since the Helsinki talks. They have increased

UNCLASSIFIED

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Page 2 of 3
Encl. No. 1
A _____ to All
Dipl. & etc.

their ABM testing. They have increased their ICBM testing, and they have been increasing the rate at which they were going forward with an ABM test as far as intercepts of missiles. They are continuing the construction _____ at ICBM sites. They are continuing the expansion of their offensive force. They are completing their work on the fourth ABM operational site near Moscow.

-- The Soviets now have more operational ICBM launchers, over 1,100, than the United States, 1,054. More than 275 of these Soviet launchers are for the large SS-9. It is projected that there will be over 1,250 operational ICBMs on launchers by mid-1970.

-- At the present time, the accuracy of the SS-9 with a single large warhead is considered sufficient to destroy a MINUTEMAN in its silo, and it is estimated that the accuracy could be further improved.

-- A year ago the Soviets had under construction or operational over 225 SS-9's and over 700 SS-11's. Today there are over 275 SS-9's under construction or operational and over 800 SS-11's. This increase of 50 SS-9's and 100 SS-11's matches peak rates of earlier years.

-- It is true that the Soviets have increased their testing program, and they are testing in the ICBM area twice as many missiles as we are, _____

As regards the testing of qualitative improvements such as the MRV (multiple re-entry vehicle), one can state the following:

-- In addition to quantitative increases, the Soviets are actively working on qualitative improvements, for example, their testing of multiple re-entry vehicles with the SS-9.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 3 of 7
Encl. No. 1
A to All
Dipl. & etc.

-- The Soviets could have deployed a simple multiple re-entry vehicle (MRV) on the SS-9 late in 1969. A more advanced MRV system on the SS-9 is possible in late 1970 if the current SS-9 test flights are intended to develop that capability. If the present SS-9 test program is not aimed at a MIRV capability, a follow-on system is probable which could provide the Soviets a MIRV capability as early as 1972.

-- The Soviets are continuing to develop a retrofired weapon which could perform as a depressed trajectory ICBM, a FOBS, or a dual system. It is possible that a small number of these weapons are already deployed in SS-9 silos.

With respect to submarine launched ballistic missiles, there are these developments to be noted:

-- The Soviets have continued their priority construction program for the Y-class nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine. This submarine, which is similar to the US POLARIS submarine, carries 16 missiles with a range in excess of 1,200 n.m.

-- In early 1969, it was projected that in 1975-77 the Soviets could have some 35-50 of these ships with 560-800 SLBM launchers. It is now projected that this "end strength" could be achieved in 1974-1975.

-- One significant development noted this past year has been the testing of a new, probably naval-oriented, ballistic missile.

In the field of medium range ballistic missiles, we have established that the Soviets have operationally deployed about 700 MRBM/IRBM launchers. Most of the launchers are located in the Western USSR, and comprise the principal strategic threat to targets in Europe. The Soviets probably will effect qualitative improvements to the force as time progresses.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 4 of 7

Encl. No. 1

A _____ to All

Dipl. & etc.

In the ABM field, the following picture can be drawn:

-- Soviet ballistic missile defense consists of long range radars around the periphery and an ABM system deployed at Moscow. The system at Moscow consists of some 60 launchers designed to fire a long range, high altitude interceptor missile. Deployment at Moscow is nearly complete.

-- The Soviets have an active ballistic missile research and development program designed to improve the present system or to develop substantially better second-generation ABM components. We now have hard evidence that they are testing an improved long-range ABM. They are also expanding their radar surveillance coverage.

-- We have information that the Soviet Union has carried on successful intercepts as far as ABM is concerned.

-- During the past year the Soviets appear to have brought a number of the Moscow ABM complexes (ABM-1) to an operational status. Testing of what appears to be an improved GALOSH missile has been noted, and such a missile could be available in the near future.

-- Last year work had stopped on the fourth of the planned eight sites in the Moscow GALOSH ABM complex. Work on that site has now been resumed, however, so that the 64 batteries at the four sites will be completed.

II. U.S. Activity and SALT

Following are recent statements by high American Government officials about U.S. activity in the strategic field and our intentions respecting SALT.

-- "The purpose of the SALT Talks is to see if we can find an agreement that is mutually acceptable to both the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviet Union has not stopped [redacted] its deployment. It has had very impressive deployments of its strategic missiles lately. It has increased

UNCLASSIFIED

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CA-1873

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 5 of 7
Encl. No. 1
A _____ to All
Dipl. & etc.

its submarine capacity substantially. If the Soviet Union wants an agreement, and we can work one out that is not to our disadvantage, then I don't think it is impossible at all that we could stop deployment of any strategic weapons systems." (Secretary of State Rogers, March 23, 1970)

-- "I don't see why we seem in this country to feel that we should take unilateral action in disarmament. We are now in the position of talking to the Soviet Union about arms limitation. There is nothing that the Soviet Union is doing that indicates to us that they've stopped their deployment or stopped any of their testing. And I don't see any reason why we should stop ours unilaterally. If the other side had some interest in working out an agreement in arms limitation, we are interested in that. But we don't propose to do it unilaterally." (Secretary Rogers, March 17, 1970)

-- "Today, when the strategic balance with the Soviet Union is so precarious and Communist China is on her way to becoming a nuclear power, the margin for error in defense planning has virtually disappeared. Therefore, today more than ever before, we must choose very carefully our future posture based on the best information attainable, for mistakes in the current strategic environment can have far-reaching consequences for the future security of this country." (Secretary Laird)

-- "We are particularly concerned about the continued rapid build-up of the Soviet land-based and submarine-based missile forces. If this build-up continues, they could have superior forces in both of these areas by 1975. It is imperative, therefore, that we keep up the momentum of this defensive (ABM) program." (Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard)

-- "I am as anxious to have SALT succeed as anyone in this country. I am just as anxious to be sure we do not jeopardize the security of the country by taking actions on the hope that SALT will succeed." (Mr. Packard)

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

CA-1873

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 6 of 7
Encl. No. 1
A _____ to All
Dipl. & etc.

-- "The authorization of Phase I Safeguard did not delay the beginning of SALT. In fact, the Russians agreed to begin the talks shortly after the Senate approved the military authorization bill including Phase I of Safeguard. The Russians are continuing the build-up of their strategic forces while they are planning to continue the arms limitation talks with us. Since the beginning of SALT in Helsinki last November, the Soviets have test fired more than twice as many strategic missiles as we have. It is imperative that we continue with our strategic programs, such as Safeguard, until and unless we achieve an agreement with the Soviets which will enable us to preserve the security of the country in some other way." (Mr. Packard)

-- "Given President Nixon's determination to postpone additional actions on U.S. offensive systems this year in order to advance prospects for success at SALT, further progress on Safeguard deployment becomes the only viable course available in Fiscal Year 1971." (Secretary Laird)

-- Success in SALT, even partial success, will serve to limit further build-up of the threat and will limit our need to augment our strategic nuclear forces beyond presently planned programs. This consideration weighed heavily on our recommendation to proceed with a minimum Phase II step at this time." (Mr. Packard)

, -- "The Phase II program which we are presenting for your approval is consistent with a low level of ABM should that be the outcome of SALT: it preserves the option to proceed either to an area defense against the Chinese or to a higher level of protection of our land based missile force should that be required either with or without an arms limitation agreement." (Mr. Packard)

-- "This year I believe we have the time to follow through on the SALT talks and to go with a very minimum program and still protect the security of the United States. Those are tough, hard decisions. The Soviet Union is establishing this timetable, and you all know in this

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CA-1873

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 7 of 7

Encl. No. 1

A _____ to All

Dipl. & etc.

building how long it takes for us to project a weapons system--from four to eight years in the future before it actually comes into our inventory." (Secretary Laird)

-- "We planned to go ahead and deploy MIRV and we had a regular schedule, and the only thing we've done is slipped the schedule. If anything, the schedule has been slipped. The schedule has slipped from the time I testified in Congress a year ago. We slipped it to June, as far as the Minuteman III is concerned, and the Poseidon has slipped a few months...probably nearer to nine months." (Secretary Laird)

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